

Call for Applications Museums Connect program

The Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy in Amman is glad to announce a call for application for the Museums Connect program (formerly Museums & Community Collaborations Abroad).

The Museums Connect (formerly Museums & Community Collaborations Abroad) grant program strengthens connections and cultural understanding between people in the United States and abroad through collaborative and innovative projects facilitated by museums.

The program has two primary goals:

- Communities in the U.S. and abroad develop a broader knowledge about and understanding of one another's cultures.
- Museums and related arts and cultural organizations create replicable models for international collaborations that reach beyond their physical walls to directly engage members of their communities.

Awards are offered on an annual basis (contingent on funding) in amounts between \$50,000 and \$100,000 and require a 50% cost-share match.

Museums Connect is supported by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and is administered by the American Alliance of Museums.

Interested museums are required to submit a Museum Profile to museumsconnect@aam-us.org and CC ReinemeyerAL@state.gov and AbdelhadiR@state.gov by October 15, 2012. Please note that there is a multi-step nomination process for this program.

For more information about the Museums Connect program, including project examples, and timeline for nomination process, visit the Cultural Programs Division's site at

<https://connect.infocentral.state.gov/pdtoolkit/index.ph> and the Alliance's Museum Connect website at www.aam-us.org/museumsconnect.

Selection Criteria:

Museums Connect grants do not fund capacity building, staff training, standard exhibition design/object exchange, or artist residencies. The projects funded go beyond traditional exhibit-based exchanges by focusing on community engagement and participation, and support the fundamental objectives of this program: increasing cross-cultural understanding and showcasing the role of cultural institutions as vibrant, engaged, and committed influencers in contemporary society.

Final selections are approved by U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, based on the recommendations of a selection committee, which evaluates the Final Proposals on the following criteria:

- (A) community involvement,
- (B) project structure,
- (C) increased understanding between the communities,
- (D) institutional capacity, and
- (E) sustainability.

Additional consideration is given to projects that include one of the cycle's designated themes:

- Addressing Community Challenges: Projects strengthen local communities by tackling critical issues (e.g., empowering women and youth; mitigating religious, cultural, or political tensions; or advocating for human rights), by providing opportunities for civic engagement and volunteerism or by creating a forum for the disengaged or disenfranchised.
- Adapting to Changing Demographics: Projects explore how museums can adapt to the changing culture and demographics of their communities (e.g., shifting age distributions, the implications of global migration, and reaching under-served communities).
- Promoting Disability Rights and Engagement: Projects promote disability rights and foster social inclusion by raising awareness about how to ensure enjoyment of rights by persons with disabilities of all types, including physical, sensory, cognitive, learning, and psycho-social; exploring ways to create an inclusive and accessible society for all; using museum resources to serve the needs of people with disabilities in ways uniquely suited to museums' missions; and by reducing barriers to access and participation.
- Investing in Green Practices: Projects develop innovative strategies for green practices (e.g., sustainable agriculture, renewable and clean energy, food and water conservation, waste reduction, or sustainable tourism) or create models for implementing green practices locally on a grassroots level and/or more broadly on a policy level.
- Developing Amateur Experts: Projects recruit and train community members as active participants in content creation through crowd sourcing, involvement as citizen scientists/citizen historians, and social media commentators as the role of museums changes from the voice of authority to that of mentor, moderator, and clearinghouse of trusted information.

Eligibility and review criteria:

For purposes of the Museums Connect program, the term 'museum' is used broadly to include both governmental and private museums of anthropology, art history and natural history, aquariums, arboreta, art centers, botanical gardens, children's museums, historic sites, nature centers, planetariums, science and technology centers, and zoos.